

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A device for manipulating and dispensing multiple filaments, comprising:

at least three plates each having ~~at least one~~ a plurality of machined ~~hole~~ holes of a predetermined diameter dimensioned to accept a filament, wherein the at least three plates are configured to adjustably align to one another, and at least one of the at least three plates may be shifted in a horizontal direction with regard to the remaining plates to secure the multiple filaments in the device, at least one of the three plates having holes having a chamfered surface at a top or bottom thereof; and

a holding mechanism configured to orient and support the at least three plates; and

a manipulating mechanism configured to manipulate the multiple filaments to:

permit contact by the multiple filaments with samples of an analytical application thereby drawing samples into the multiple filaments or adhering the samples to the multiple filaments;

position the multiple filaments in or out of analytical instruments or fluid supplies; or

dispense the multiple filaments into a secondary holder or apparatus.

2. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein each machined hole is configured to permit unrestricted passage of a filament in a vertical direction.

3. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 2, wherein the ~~plurality of~~ multiple filaments are capillary tubes.

4. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 2, wherein the ~~plurality of~~ multiple filaments are optical fibers.

5. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 2, wherein the ~~plurality of~~ multiple filaments are light guiding capillary tubing.

6. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein a plate pattern of the at least three plates corresponds to one of a 96, 384 and 1536 well plate design pattern.

7. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the holding mechanism comprises:

at least one tension device configured to actuate at least one of the at least three plates into one of a locked and unlocked position; and  
holder means configured to secure the at least three plates into the device.

8. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 7, wherein the at least one tension device is adjustable.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) A method for manipulating and dispensing filaments, comprising:

loading a plurality of filaments in machined holes of a device having at least three plates;

shifting at least one of the at least three plates in a horizontal direction with respect to the remaining plates to secure the plurality of filaments into the device; and

~~manipulating the plurality of filaments and the device to permit contact by the secured filaments with a sample of an analytical application thereby drawing the sample into the filament or adhering the sample to the filament~~

manipulating the plurality of filaments to:

permit contact by the plurality of filaments with samples of an analytical application thereby drawing the samples into the plurality of filaments or adhering the samples to the plurality of filaments;

position the plurality of filaments in or out of analytical instruments or fluid supplies; or

dispense the plurality of filaments into a secondary holder or apparatus.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising:  
analyzing the samples of the analytical application; and  
unloading the plurality of filaments from the device.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11, wherein analyzing the samples includes at least one of transferring and dispensing the samples of the analytical application from the filament.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11, wherein unloading the plurality of filaments includes shifting at least one plate in a horizontal direction with respect to the remaining plates to release the plurality of filaments from the device.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, wherein unloading the plurality of filaments further includes one of disposing of the plurality of filaments and cleaning the plurality of filaments for re-use.